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India-Pakistan Relations

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S Jaishankar's Islamabad visit is brings hope for improvement in India-Pakistan relations.

About

- The downturn in ties between India and Pakistan since 2016, after which no high-level bilateral talks have been held, is clearly mirrored in the survey.
- Previous surveys in 2011 and 2013 had indicated a much higher optimism for reconciliation in the subcontinent.

Brief on India- Pakistan Relations

- India-Pakistan relations are complex and have been marked by **periods of tension, conflict, and occasional cooperations** since the two countries gained independence from Britain in 1947.

Timeline

- **Partition and Early Conflicts:** The partition of British India into India and Pakistan in 1947 led to large-scale migrations and violence.
- The first major conflict came with the First Kashmir War (1947-48) over the disputed region of Jammu and Kashmir.
- **Wars and Conflicts:** The two countries fought three more major wars:
 - **1965 War:** Another conflict over Kashmir, resulting in a UN-mandated ceasefire.
 - **1971 War:** Resulted in the independence of Bangladesh (formerly East Pakistan) after a brutal conflict.
 - **1999 Kargil Conflict:** A brief but intense conflict in the Kargil district of Kashmir where India emerged victorious.
- **Nuclearization:** Both countries conducted nuclear tests in 1998, this has added a new dimension to the strategic calculus.
- **Peace Efforts and Dialogues:** There have been numerous attempts at dialogue and peace-building, including the Agra Summit (2001) and the Lahore Summit (1999).
- However, progress has often been stymied by various issues, including terrorism and cross-border violence by Pakistan.
- **Terrorism and Security Issues:** Attacks like the 2001 Indian Parliament attack and the 2008 Mumbai attacks have significantly strained relations.
- The Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) of Pakistan has been accused of playing a role in several terrorist attacks in India.
- **Pulwama Attack:** In February 2019, an attack on a convoy of Indian paramilitary forces in Pulwama, Kashmir, killed at least forty soldiers.
- The attack, claimed by the Pakistani militant group JeM, was the deadliest in Kashmir in three decades.
- India retaliated by conducting an air strike that targeted terrorist training camps within Pakistani territory.
- **Current Dynamics:** The relations remain strained, with sporadic dialogue and efforts at normalization, but ongoing issues like the Kashmir dispute, cross-border terrorism, and political tensions continue to dominate the relationship.

Kamaraj IAS Academy

Plot A P.127, AF block, 6 th street, 11th Main Rd, Shanthi Colony, Anna Nagar, Chennai, Tamil Nadu 600040

Phone: **044 4353 9988 / 98403 94477** / Whatsapp : **09710729833**

Areas of Cooperation

- **Indus Water Treaty:** This treaty, established in 1960, governs the use of the Indus River and its tributaries.
- Despite ongoing disputes, it has largely been successful in managing water resources between the two countries.
- **Kartarpur Corridor Agreement (2019):** An Agreement between India and Pakistan for the facilitation of pilgrims to visit Gurdwara Darbar Sahib Kartarpur, Pakistan, was signed in 2019 in order to fulfill the long-standing demand of the pilgrims to have easy and smooth access to the holy Gurudwara.
- **Cricket:** Cricket matches between India and Pakistan often attract widespread attention and have sometimes been used as a platform to ease tensions and foster goodwill.
- **Bilateral Talks:** Periodic diplomatic dialogues and summits, despite their ups and downs, provide platforms for addressing various issues and finding common ground.
- **Peace Agreements:** Simla Agreement (1972), Lahore Summit Declaration (1999), Agra Summit (2001) are the major peace establishing agreements signed between both the countries.

Way Ahead

- Both countries have significant internal and external challenges that impact their bilateral relations
- In keeping with its “**Neighbourhood First Policy**”, India desires normal neighbourly relations with Pakistan
- India has made clear that it **will not compromise** on issues relating to **national security** and will take **firm and decisive steps** to deal with all attempts to undermine **India’s security and territorial integrity**.